

**Chinese Travelers to**  
**CALIFORNIA**

**Prepared for**  
**California Tourism**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### CHINESE TRAVELERS TO CALIFORNIA

**Total Market.** Of 270,000 Chinese visitors to the U.S., 54.2%, or 146,000 visited California in 2005. This represented a 44.6% increase from 2004, and a drop of 8% from the peak year of 2001. Chinese arrival volumes at California ports-of-entry were showing an increase in 2006 continuing a trend of increase from the previous two years.

	Visitors to CA from China (est.)	China to CA as % of total US
1994	NA	NA
1995	NA	NA
1996	NA	NA
1997	NA	NA
1998	NA	NA
1999	NA	NA
2000	106,000	59.6%
2001	158,000	67.9%
2002	120,000	53.0%
2003	71,000	44.9%
2004	101,000	49.8%
2005	146,000	54.2%

**Main Destination.** About three-fourths of all Chinese visitors to California (75%) reported California was the main destination of their U.S. trip. Leisure visitors from China reported a higher percentage (85%).

**Purpose of Trip.** Among all Chinese visitors to California in 2005, 61% reported business was one of their major reasons for traveling. Other reasons for traveling included vacation/holiday (36%), visiting friends/relatives (35%), and attending a convention (14%).

Visitors often report multiple purposes of trip. Most leisure visitors from China (72%) reported visiting California in 2005 to visit friends and relatives. The proportion of leisure visitors who were on vacation/holiday was 51%.

**Port of Entry.** A combined total of 76% of Chinese visitors to California entered the U.S. through west coast ports. Nearly two-fifths (39%) entered through San Francisco, followed by Los Angeles (36%). The third highest city was Honolulu which processed 5% of Chinese visitors to California.

**Top Metropolitan Areas Visited in California.** Chinese visitors to California in 2005 tended to center their trip itineraries on the major cities of Los Angeles (57%), San Francisco (48%) and San Jose (12%).

**Leisure/Recreation Activities.** The top leisure and recreation activities reported by visitors from China, whether traveling for business or leisure, were shopping, dining and sightseeing. Chinese travelers are more likely to visit casinos or gamble and less likely to go on guided tours or go out to nightclubs or dancing than other overseas visitor groups.

**Advance Trip Decision.** In total, Chinese travelers to California reported making their trip decision 49 days in advance of their trip. This is a shorter average trip decision time than the 90 days reported by all overseas visitors to California. Chinese leisure travelers made their trip decision 67 days in advance of their trip.

**Means of Booking Air Trip.** Almost half of Chinese travelers to California in 2005 (49%) booked their air trip via a travel agent. This was higher than the 46% who booked their trip via a travel agent in 2004, but still lower than most other major overseas markets to California.

**Means of Booking Lodging.** About 20% of all Chinese visitors and 17% of Chinese leisure travelers pre-booked their lodging predominantly via a travel agent. In 2005 25% of Chinese travelers reported booking California lodging through a company travel department. More than 22% of leisure Chinese travelers booked their accommodations with the help of friends or relatives.

**Trip Information Sources.** Among Chinese visitors to California, the most frequently mentioned sources of information included: a travel agency (34%), followed by corporate travel departments (31%) direct information from airlines (20%), friends/relatives (17%), and personal computer (12%).

**Length of Stay.** Chinese visitors stayed an average of 24.3 nights in the U.S. and 15.0 nights in California. In comparison the length of stay for all overseas visitors to California was 10.6 nights in the state.

**Sex and Age.** Men comprised 78% of Chinese travelers to California with a median age of 37 years. This is less than the median age reported by all overseas visitors to California (42 years). Women represented 22% of all Chinese travelers to California in 2005, with a median age of 33 years compared to 40 years reported by all overseas female visitors. Looking at leisure travel only, the proportions tend to even out. About 69% of Chinese leisure travelers to California are men and 31% are women.

**Travel Party Size.** Nearly all (94%) of Chinese travel groups consist of adults only. Only 6% of Chinese travel groups to California include children. The mean travel party size for all Chinese visitors to the state was 1.7 people and the party size for leisure visitors was also 1.7 people.

**Annual Household Income.** Visitors from China reported significantly lower median household incomes (\$31,200) relative to all overseas visitors to California (\$78,800). The median household income of Chinese leisure visitors to California was (\$41,500).

**Accommodations.** More than two-thirds of Chinese visitors (71%) to California chose a hotel or motel as their primary type of accommodation during their stay in 2005. This proportion is lower than the 79 percent reported by all overseas visitors to California. Chinese leisure visitors also reported a lower propensity to stay in a hotel/motel (55%). Only 28% of all Chinese visitors but 56% of Chinese leisure visitors stayed in a private home in 2005.

**Use of Prepaid Package.** In 2006, 20% of Chinese visitors and 9% of Chinese leisure visitors used prepaid packages.

**Expenditures.** Visitors to California from China spent an estimated 210 million dollars in California in 2005. Chinese visitors were spending an average of \$96 per day during their visit. Leisure visitors from China spent an average of \$42 per day. Each visitor to California from China spent an average of \$1,440 in the state, and each leisure visitor spent an average of \$1,092 in California.

**Average International Airfare.** Average international airfare to the U.S. was \$1,411 for Chinese visitors and \$1,450 for leisure Chinese visitors.